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OFFICE OF FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS
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WORLD EGG PRODUCTION IN 1948; CURRENT CHICKEN NUMBERS

Egg production in the principal producing countries of the world in 1948 was about 1.3 percent above the 1947 level. Nearly all the increase occurred in western Europe where the recovery in poultry numbers has been rapid, considering the short grain supply from the 1947 harvest. Egg output in Canada dropped in 1948 but in the United States it was maintained at the 1947 level although materially below the peak wartime level.

Chicken numbers at the beginning of 1949 equalled or exceeded prewar numbers in the United Kingdom, France, Sweden and Spain. Satisfactory progress was made in Italy and Belgium. Rebuilding of flocks has been slower in the Netherlands, Norway and to a lesser extent in Denmark. These countries are considerably dependent upon imported grains and feedstuffs.

Much of the increase in egg production and in poultry numbers in Europe reflected increases in the number and size of small flocks. Commercial or specialized poultry flocks increased less because of the limited availability of commercial feeds. Small producers with a few hectares of land found it profitable to convert their home-grown feeds into chickens and eggs. These small producers, including a considerable number of self-suppliers, could meet their delivery quotas at controlled prices, where in effect, and market their surplus on the open market at highly profitable prices.

The delivery of eggs by producers and the rationing of supplies to consumers continue in deficit countries such as Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Norway. Rationing has been suspended temporarily in the United Kingdom during the current flush producing months. In France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Belgium, controls were previously lifted.

With a somewhat better feed situation since the 1948 harvest, together with a strong demand for eggs and poultry as a palatable food and as a substitute for red meats, the production of poultry and eggs in most European countries will expand in 1949. Supplies of red meats in 1949 and 1950 will still be short and production of eggs and poultry will continue to be profitable.

The rate-of-lay in most European countries has shown some improvement, notwithstanding an unsatisfactory general feed situation. Apparently, producers are finding that their chickens respond well to increases in feed and are directing their feeds to this enterprise, possibly at the expense of other uses. Furthermore, a low capital outlay is required, plus the quick expected returns.

In many of the European countries, steps have been taken to improve the producing qualities of chickens. Improved stock is imported and government breeding stations are maintained to distribute hatching eggs and chicks to producers at reasonable prices. Considerable further improvement in the producing qualities of chickens can be expected in the immediate future. This improvement will not reduce the size of flock needed to maintain egg consumption per capita, as it will be offset by the increase in the human population in European countries.

Although Denmark was able to export some eggs in the immediate postwar years, the trade in eggs between countries in Europe is only now showing sizable gains. Belgium, Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Eire are beginning to resume their exports.

The farm production of eggs in Canada in 1948 fell to 4.2 billion compared with a peak level of nearly 4.5 billion in 1947. A sharp liquidation of chickens occurred in the fall of 1947 because of short feed supplies and the resulting unfavorable egg-feed price relationship. The 1948 hatch was smaller and the number of layers was 23 percent fewer in December 1948, and 21 percent fewer in January 1949, compared with a year earlier. The reduction in the number of layers was partially offset in December by a higher rate-of-lay but more severe weather in January 1949 than in January 1948 pulled the rate-of-lay down 2 percent. Thus, 1949 was started off with a net egg production of 23 percent below the initial month in 1948.

Chickens on farms in the United States on January 1, 1949 were 3 percent fewer than a year earlier and 6 percent below the 10-year average. Fewer chickens were raised in 1948 but farmers retained a larger-than-usual proportion of the pullets raised. Egg production in the United States in 1948 was only slightly below the 1947 output. With lower feed costs and increased feed availability, heavier feeding, together with mild weather, is currently resulting in a high rate-of-lay, and egg production in 1949 may slightly exceed 1948, although there were fewer hens and pullets at the beginning of the year.

In the eastern Mediterranean countries the demand for eggs and poultry has increased interest in this industry. Feed supplies have been available for some expansion. As indicated by the wholesale receipts at the 7 important consuming centers in the Union of South Africa, egg production and poultry numbers have increased since 1947. Feed supplies have been favorable and the increase in the production of eggs has permitted some exports of eggs to the United Kingdom.

Chicken numbers in Australia on March 31, 1948 were lower because of a shortage of suitable feedstuffs in 1947. Higher current costs of feed and other items used by the industry are tending to reduce the number of chickens and the output of eggs. While the reduction is not expected to be large, information available indicates that Australian egg production may level off slightly below the peak level reached in the 1946-47 season.

Contrary to earlier trade estimates, the 1948 chicken hatch in Argentina was not more than 5 percent above the 1947 hatch, notwithstanding a favorable egg-feed price relationship. Feed prices to poultrymen may be higher in 1949 but the current price of chickens and eggs is the highest ever recorded in Argentina. This indicates a strong consumer demand and exports of eggs and chickens are apt to be small as the world price level of eggs and poultry, in comparison with present Argentine prices, is not favorable to exports.

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production approved by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics. For this report, the Committee was composed of Joseph A. Becker, Chairman, C. M. Purves, Floyd E. Davis, Karen J. Friedmann, Constance H. Farnworth, and Stanley Mehr.

EGGS: Number produced ^{1/} in specified countries, average 1934-38,
annual 1945-48

Countries	Average 1934-38	1945	1946	1947	1948
	Millions	Millions	Millions	Millions	Millions
North America					
Canada.....	2,638	-	3,883	4,484	4,214
Panama.....	-	-	-	52	-
United States.....	35,498	55,858	55,590	55,252	55,168
Cuba.....	320	324	300	288	276
Dominican Republic.....	-	-	60	60	-
Europe					
Albania.....	143	-	-	-	-
Austria.....	663	336	270	285	350
Belgium.....	1,693	400	1,100	1,380	1,440
Bulgaria.....	682	273	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia.....	1,958	596	776	903	1,110
Denmark.....	1,979	858	883	995	1,568
Eire.....	1,086	760	801	733	880
Finland.....	317	-	93	117	-
France.....	6,200	-	6,200	6,300	6,100
Germany.....	6,585	-	-	-	-
Greece.....	550	332	352	331	-
Hungary.....	1,050	66	110	-	-
Italy.....	5,600	2,400	3,600	4,300	4,600
Luxembourg.....	40	-	-	30	35
Netherlands.....	1,978	200	385	914	1,000
Norway.....	369	86	155	198	263
Poland and Danzig.....	3,500	-	2,276	-	-
Portugal.....	250	-	-	-	-
Rumania.....	1,500	-	^{2/} 532	-	-
Spain.....	1,700	-	-	1,992	1,800
Sweden.....	900	970	1,149	1,217	1,335
Switzerland.....	423	250	300	330	-
United Kingdom-Farm ^{3/} _{4/}	3,871	2,090	2,418	2,600	3,000
Total..... ^{4/} _{4/}	5,098	3,409	3,850	4,000	4,300
Yugoslavia.....	1,000	-	-	-	-
Asia					
Lebanon.....	-	65	65	-	-
Palestine.....	108	150	200	-	-
Syria.....	92	105	120	90	110
Turkey.....	1,003	851	863	895	-
Japan.....	3,553	864	936	-	-
Philippine Islands.....	-	-	-	-	250
South America					
Argentina.....	1,127	-	-	-	-
Brazil.....	-	-	-	-	2,160
Chile.....	-	-	520	460	370
Paraguay.....	-	-	-	100	-
Uruguay.....	289	-	358	326	-
Africa					
Egypt.....	751	-	-	-	-
French Morocco.....	1,000	-	-	444	-
Union of South Africa... ^{5/}	5/	480	-	372	-
Oceania					
Australia ^{6/}	708	1,358	1,470	1,431	1,440
New Zealand.....	430	-	-	-	-

^{1/} Relates to farm production in Canada and the United States, but data for many countries not explicit on this point. ^{2/} 58 countries. ^{3/} Year ending in May of year indicated. ^{4/} 3-year average. ^{5/} Not available. ^{6/} Commercial production.

Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. Prepared or estimated on the basis of official statistics of foreign governments, reports of United States Foreign Service officers, results of office research, and other information. Data relate to prewar boundaries, unless otherwise noted.

CHICKENS: Number in specified countries, average 1934-38,
annual 1946-1949

Countries	Date applicable	Average 1934-38	1946	1947	1948	1949
	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
North America						
Canada.....	1/ Dec. 1	44,077	51,697	54,728	47,310	40,000
Guatemala.....	2/	664	-	-	-	-
Mexico.....	March	3/ 36,368	-	-	-	-
Newfoundland and Labrador.....	4/	387	371	377	-	-
Panama.....	2/	195	1,372	1,528	-	-
United States.....	Jan. 1	408,177	530,203	474,441	461,550	448,838
Cuba.....	July	-	10,500	10,000	9,000	8,500
Dominican Republic.....		2,358	1,906	1,900	-	-
Europe						
Albania.....		2,060	1,800	-	-	-
Austria.....	1/ Dec. 3	2/ 8,862	5,300	5,400	5,800	5,600
Belgium.....	1/ Dec. 31	16,500	11,111	13,333	13,500	16,100
Bulgaria.....	1/ Dec. 31	5/ 11,814	-	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia.....	May 27	2/ 31,875	-	6/ 10,660	6/ 11,982	6/ 14,978
Denmark.....	July	2/ 27,643	18,388	19,415	23,816	26,000
Eire.....	June	15,961	15,263	14,537	-	-
Finland 7/.....	Sept. 1	2,853	1,171	-	-	-
France 8/.....	1/ Fall	145,000	-	145,500	-	-
Germany.....	1/ Dec.	86,624	9/ 39,018	-	-	-
Greece 10/.....	1/ Nov. 30	11,679	8,200	7,500	8,200	-
Hungary.....	Feb. 28	5/ 17,880	11/16,000	-	-	-
Italy.....		76,000	-	12/50,613	-	-
Luxembourg.....	1/ Dec. 1	2/ 515	275	350	380	433
Netherlands.....	June	29,632	13/ 3,078	13/ 7,315	-	13/ 9,843
Norway.....	June 20	5,686	2,926	3,768	4,663	5,500
Poland and Danzig.....	July	50,000	20,000	-	39,000	-
Portugal.....	1/ Dec. 31	14/ 5,716	-	-	-	-
Rumania.....		2/ 31,853	15/10,939	-	-	-
Spain.....	July 1	16/28,972	17/22,468	-	37,200	33,500
Sweden.....	Sept. 16	10,980	-	18/12,395	18/13,991	18/15,000
Switzerland.....	Apr.	5,544	5,043	5,025	-	-
United Kingdom - Farm..	June	73,402	60,576	64,880	79,200	91,000
Total.....	June	-	76,393	81,526	-	-
Yugoslavia.....	1/ Dec. 31	18,021	-	-	-	-
Asia						
Lebanon.....	1/ Dec.	-	1,400	1,450	-	-
Palestine.....	2/	1,914	-	-	-	-
Syria.....		1,525	2,029	1,826	1,900	-
Turkey.....		16,794	18,422	18,514	17,303	-
China.....		265,765	184,984	204,115	-	-
Japan.....	July	51,094	19,000	-	-	-
India.....		-	146,081	-	-	-
Pakistan.....		-	44,732	-	-	-
Philippine Islands.....		25,365	9,434	-	23,000	25,000
South America						
Argentina.....	June	19/42,988	-	-	-	-
Brazil.....		4/ 59,000	-	-	60,000	-
Chile.....	June	2/ 1,026	5,000	4,500	3,600	-
Paraguay.....		-	-	2,000	-	-
Uruguay.....		19/ 4,814	-	-	-	-
Africa						
Egypt.....	July	14/26,889	-	-	-	-
French Morocco.....		2/ 50,000	-	-	-	-
Union of South Africa..	Aug	19/14,000	18,600	16,000	-	-
Oceania						
Australia.....	1/ Dec. 31	15,541	15,000	-	-	-
New Zealand.....	March	14/ 3,489	-	-	-	-

1/ End of year estimates (October to December) included under the following year for comparison. Thus, for Canada, the December 1, 1946 estimate of 51,697 is shown under 1946. 2/ Average for 2 to 4 years only. 3/ 1940. 4/ 1938. 5/ 1935. 6/ January 1. 7/ Adult poultry. 8/ Represents chickens raised. 9/ Four zones. 10/ All poultry. 11/ September. 12/ Hens and cocks. 13/ December previous year; hens and pullets. 14/ 1936. 15/ 58 countries instead of 71 as for prewar. 16/ 1939. 17/ April. 18/ June. 19/ 1937.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FPE 2-49

September 19, 1949

INDICATED 1949 WORLD EGG PRODUCTION

Egg production in 1949 in the principal producing countries for which reports were available appears approximately 5 percent above 1948, according to information available to the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations. There have been important increases in production in the past year in western Europe, where the demand for eggs has been strong. More readily available feed supplies and favorable egg-feed price relationships have encouraged production. An increased rate of lay per hen in recent years has contributed to a larger world output of eggs.

Production in the United States thus far in 1949 has been almost the same as a year earlier and the total output for the year should differ little from 1948. Canada, on the other hand, continues to show a considerable decrease in egg production and is the only country where output is appreciably lower.

World egg production is about one-fifth above the 1934-38 prewar average. This is mainly accounted for by the 50 percent increase in the United States in the past 10 years. This sizeable increase heavily influences the world comparison as it represents a production 8 times larger than that of any other country and approximately one-half of all reported egg production.

Egg production in 1949 will exceed prewar in Belgium, Denmark, France, Sweden, and Switzerland, and favorable gains in production from low wartime levels were made in Ireland, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, and the United Kingdom. The countries now exporting eggs are led by Denmark, followed by Ireland, the Netherlands, Hungary, and Belgium. Mediterranean European countries, on the other hand, have reported less pronounced increases in their egg production. Austria and Italy have shown a slight increase in production, while the output in Greece is below 1948.

Egg prices, almost without exception, have declined in 1949, but the increase in feed supplies has caused a more than comparable drop in the price of feed. Thus, in many countries, including the United States, the egg-feed ratio continues quite favorable. In addition to the increased availability of feed, the government supervision of hatcheries in many countries is gradually improving the quality of hens and contributing to the larger production of 1949.

The poultry industries of central and northwestern European countries, with the exception of the United Kingdom, have recovered to the extent that rationing and price controls are not the general rule. Many countries of this area have several broad programs, such as financing feed supplies, improving the quality of birds, supplying husbandry information, and providing sufficient inspection and market outlets.

The lowland countries, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Belgium, have all resumed exports. Denmark will produce, consume and export more eggs this year than in 1948. The imports of grains and the reduced price of poultry feed provide farmers with an optimistic outlook, since considerable export markets have been obtained. Danish farmers will tend to increase egg production under egg-feed relationships as favorable as those currently prevailing. Domestic consumption of eggs has been 10 percent higher than prewar due to the meat shortage, but high prices will cause more to be sold and less to be eaten at home. Danish efforts to provide high quality products in ample supply have boosted their eggs to third place in national exports.

Higher egg production in the Netherlands this year has enabled exports to be resumed at an important level, but current levels have been reached by requiring a portion of each poultryman's egg delivery for export in order to provide exchange credits to purchase the necessary protein feeds for the poultry industry. The Netherlands has removed rationing and in February dropped price controls. This has permitted consumers to bid freely for their egg supplies at a price which is profitable to poultrymen. Few eggs were placed in storage in 1949. The largest hatch since the war occurred in 1949.

Belgium returned to an egg export basis in April and the government has been enforcing quality controls so that only high-grade eggs will leave the country. Egg prices have declined but are in favorable relation to feed due to the larger feed supplies from both indigenous and foreign sources. As yet, the rate of lay per hen has been fairly low as a result of diseases and overcrowded poultry houses.

In 1948, egg production in Ireland increased substantially during subsidization from the United Kingdom and the Irish governments. This governmental aid has decreased in 1949, but the prices offered remain favorable enough so that definite expansion in egg production is encouraged. The Irish hope that the result of negotiations with England will be the continuance of price-setting two years in advance for unlimited quantities of exports, thus permitting forward planning by farmers. High quality chicks were offered at low prices during the hatching season by the government, enabling the farmers to increase the rate of lay.

In 1949, egg production in the United Kingdom increased as a result of favorable weather and some increase in chicken numbers. Feed supplies are furnished in proportion to egg deliveries to packing stations and are more abundant than formerly. Norway is still in short supply and unable

to meet domestic requirements. Egg production is profitable and conditions are quite favorable for poultrymen. The large hatch in 1949 is expected to ease the shortage by the end of the year.

Sweden appears to have ample egg supplies. However, the low government support price in 1949 is expected to discourage a large hatch this year. The present high level of consumer purchasing and the continuation of meat rationing are expected to assist in maintaining a strong domestic egg market. Further increases in Swedish egg production would necessitate seeking foreign market outlets.

Egg production in France is now about 5 percent above prewar. Chicken numbers equal or exceed prewar and grain prices are generally favorable to feeding for a relatively high rate of lay. Farmers can now buy and sell secondary cereals without transportation and end use permits. Notwithstanding a higher egg production in France than prewar, supplies to consumers in urban centers are not always obtainable at reasonable prices.

The Mediterranean countries seem to be generally less concerned about their poultry industries and have administered less effective poultry programs. These countries are still heavy importers of eggs and also import feed for domestic production and continue to operate rationing and delivery production programs.

Czechoslovakian egg production, while still materially below prewar, has recovered somewhat from a low wartime level. Egg production has been facilitated by government control of hatcheries that have offered more and better chicks. This, plus the aid of improved feed supplies, should considerably ease the demand for eggs by this fall. The recently revised requirements for egg deliveries are based upon the number of hectares in each farm and not on the number of poultry as was the previous plan.

Austria received urgently needed feed imports through the assistance of ECA, which may increase egg production. Larger domestic production and imports are needed to ease the black market trade in eggs.

Greece has continued to decrease its egg production due mainly to continued spread of Newcastle disease and the lack of concentrated feeds. High import duties on feed and no duty on eggs make it easier to import eggs than to remove domestic production difficulties.

South American governments are giving more attention than in the past to encouragement of egg production, but outside of Venezuela the efforts are not important, since the poultry industries of the other countries consist mostly of very small native flocks. Large commercial poultry enterprises with modern production and marketing methods are being encouraged in Venezuela.

In Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, the 1949 feed supplies have been more plentiful and the egg production outlook appears favorable.

The Canadian production of farm eggs in 1949 will be about 330 million less than last year. Chicken numbers have continued below 1948 in spite of the 15 percent increase in hatch during 1949 over 1948.

The increased demand for chicks was relatively greater for cockerels of heavier breeds than for pullets. This change in interest results from the doubtful egg export market in 1950. Currently, the egg-feed ratio is relatively favorable.

The United States production in the first half of 1949 was slightly below the same period in 1948. The decrease was due to a smaller national flock and possibly to a larger carryover of hens. In the remaining months, however, the expected addition of pullets from the large 1949 hatch may yield an increase in production of eggs in 1949 over 1948. The present egg-feed ratio should encourage heavier feeding which would raise the rate of lay slightly.

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production approved by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics. For this report, the Committee was composed of Arthur W. Palmer, Acting Chairman, Floyd E. Davis, Charles C. Wilson, and Stanley Mehr.

EGGS 1/: Number produced in specified countries,
average 1934-38, annual 1946-1949

Countries	Average 1934-38	1946	1947	1948	Indicated 1949
	Millions	Millions	Millions	Millions	Millions
NORTH AMERICA					
Canada.....	2,638	3,883	4,484	4,279	3,940
Panama.....	-	-	52	-	-
United States.....	35,498	55,590	55,252	55,168	55,500
Cuba.....	320	300	288	276	264
Dominican Republic.....	-	60	60	-	-
EUROPE					
Albania.....	143	-	-	-	-
Austria.....	663	270	285	350	380
Belgium.....	1,693	1,100	1,380	1,440	1,800
Bulgaria.....	682	-	-	-	-
Czechoslovakia.....	1,958	776	903	1,110	1,380
Denmark.....	1,979	883	995	1,568	2,100
Eire.....	1,086	801	733	920	1,080
Finland.....	317	93	117	-	-
France.....	6,200	6,200	6,300	6,100	6,500
Germany.....	6,585	-	-	-	-
Greece.....	550	349	376	367	350
Hungary.....	1,050	-	650	750	-
Italy.....	5,600	3,600	4,300	4,450	4,550
Luxembourg.....	40	-	30	35	35
Netherlands.....	1,978	480	1,052	1,280	1,540
Norway.....	369	155	198	263	330
Poland and Danzig.....	3,500	2,276	-	-	-
Portugal.....	250	-	-	-	-
Rumania.....	1,500	2/ 532	-	-	-
Spain.....	1,700	-	1,992	1,800	-
Sweden.....	900	1,149	1,217	1,335	1,500
Switzerland.....	423	391	442	520	559
United Kingdom - Farm <u>3/</u> 4/	3,871	2,418	2,600	3,000	3,500
Total <u>3/</u> 4/	5,098	3,850	4,000	4,300	5,000
Yugoslavia.....	1,000	-	-	-	-
ASIA					
Lebanon.....	-	65	60	48	-
Palestine.....	108	200	-	-	-
Syria.....	92	120	90	110	-
Turkey.....	1,003	863	895	-	-
China.....	-	-	-	-	-
Japan.....	3,553	936	-	-	-
India.....	-	2,794	-	-	-
Pakistan.....	-	571	-	-	-
Philippine Islands.....	-	-	-	250	-
SOUTH AMERICA					
Argentina.....	1,127	-	-	-	-
Brazil.....	-	-	-	2,160	-
Chile.....	-	520	460	370	-
Paraguay.....	-	-	100	-	-
Uruguay.....	289	358	326	-	-
AFRICA					
Egypt.....	751	-	-	-	-
French Morocco.....	1,000	-	-	-	-
Union of South Africa.....	5/	-	372	-	-
OCEANIA					
Australia <u>6/</u>	708	1,358	1,470	1,434	1,440
New Zealand.....	430	-	-	-	-

1/ Relates to farm production in Canada and the United States, but data for many countries not explicit on this point. 2/ 58 countries. 3/ Year ending in May of year indicated. 4/ 3-year average. 5/ Not available. 6/ Commercial production.

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